Letters to the editor

Fred Post 6/21/86

The mayor's side:

When Meachum is angry facts don't matter

I certainly had mixed emotions about writing this letter. I long ago recognized that the press has more ink than any person, politician or organization. Fortunately, most members of the press are good, well-intentioned people with a job to do, who, like the rest of us, try to do it well. They make mistakes as we make mistakes. Unfortunately, not all are like that, and that certainly isn't the case for Roy Meachum.

I have been friends with Roy Meachum since not too long after he moved to Frederick. In terms of coverage in his column, many of us have not too jokingly stated that the only worse thing than being Roy's enemy is being Roy's friend.

Politically, Roy knew and understood very little about the Frederick scene. He called me, off the record, and picked my brain in terms of what was happening in Frederick politics. He did the same of Galen Clagett and, I presume, others. Our best insights he would write as his own. On other points he would stick us and then he would tell us that he had to do it so as to be balanced and so that people wouldn't think he was giving us partial coverage.

We recently held the first Frederick Arts Festival. It went very nicely, thanks to Ted Gregory, Regina Flanigan and a huge number of hardworking volunteers. Roy Meachum pushed the hardest of any citizen in town to start this event. I appointed him to the committee and even thought he might chair it. He agreed to co-chair it. He then decided he could not work with the other co-chairmen and, early on, quit.

Roy was furious at the time of the festival. He felt he should have gotten credit for it. He made calls to various personnel at City Hall demanding recognition in the paper. He wanted credit. He held me responsible. He got angry when I told him the idea for such a festival was not just his, and he stormed away without further conversation.

When Roy gets angry with you he cocks his head back, dismisses you from further conversation or consideration, and walks away. Watch out for his column.

I would like to point out that immediately after storming away from me at a reception for Don Hutchinson, Roy wrote a column dismissing Don from the Senate race. He now attacks Don for not giving a damn about Western Maryland, even though Don has campaigned here more than any other candidate. Roy also was upset because he didn't like the way Don was running his campaign and Don wouldn't change. Roy did tell me he liked Don. It would have been to Don Hutchinson's benefit if Roy and I had not been friends and if Roy had not liked Don.

Roy can be happy now. Don quit the race. He did it his way, and he did it with integrity. Roy, you should learn from Don.

Roy is down on Baltimore Mayor William Donald Schaefer also. His attacks on him have been minor because he is sure that the mayor will win. Still, watch for the digs.

Roy used to tell me how friendly I was and how different I was from other politicians. Now he says I have a polyester personality, play games and whistle through a smug smile.

Roy accuses me of losing the election for two perfectly nice guys that he privately attacked during the election. They, in reality, are perfectly good hard-working guys whom I considered friends before and still do.

Roy, I take responsibility for what I do whether it works out or not. Most has worked out. I try not to use *I* very often. I have been around a long time politically. I hope that I have provided the leadership that has made this a dynamic community. It has been *we* that have done it. We, the mayor and board. *We, the citizens of Frederick. We.*

Roy's major attack on me was for grabbing the land at Amber Meadows and west of Route 15 along Opossumtown Pike and Butterfly Lane. I, supposedly, greedily annexed this land to build a power base. Roy didn't bother to check the record and note that all this land was annexed *before* I was mayor. I think the city was correct in doing it, but the facts should be in order.

Facts don't matter to Roy. Whether he is attacking me, Don Hutchinson, or Israel in his international columns, Roy's knowledge is limited, but that doesn't stop him if he is angry.

Roy Meachum hasn't called me for advice in weeks. After this letter, unless the letter makes him hesitate, which I hope it does but doubt, I think you will be able to detect from Roy's column who I support in the coming elections. They will be attacked. I am going to confuse him. There are several candidates I like that he doesn't know about. I don't think I'll tell him. Roy will find other things he feels I should be chastised for. So be it.

Since I first wrote this letter Roy has attacked again. This time on the taxing district. I'm again not going to stoop to try to answer his lies and innuendoes. What he has outlined in both his stories is inaccurate, to say the least. The man is vicious. He is dangerous. He has no integrity.

I, frankly, write this letter for several purposes. I do not really know that it will serve any of those purposes; I hope so.

1. Many people I know have been offended by Roy's column but have hesitated to say so because of fear of being further criticized in future columns.

2. I want to point out the petty reason why he is now on my back and on the backs of other good people I support for election.

3. I want to hit Roy between the eyes, if possible, with his own ego so as to hopefully awaken him from his vengeance. He is a child with adult weapons. I hope he may be disarmed and begin to grow.

4. Roy is probably the best potential goodwill ambassador and columnist the local paper has had. He writes some beautiful pieces and delves into areas of local interest that no one else touches. We need that, and I give Roy all the credit in the world for it. Unfortunately his professionalism stops when it comes to keeping his ego, his anger, his vengeance and his personal feelings out of his writing. He uses his column to carry out his personal crusades. It would be nice if we could have the good without the bad.

5. To point out that Roy's column on the roads and who pays for them lacks substance. It was full of inconsistencies that I won't elaborate on. By the way, Roy, the city is in the county and some county expenditures for city roads is

reasonable to expect. It should be cooperative, and we try to work together.

6. Roy indicated he was hustled out of the Planner's office. The gentleman waiting had an appointment. Roy didn't. Roy doesn't feel he needs appointments. Roy feels others should wait for him.

7. To point out that further hatred shall pour out of him. He has already told the chief of police that he was giving him a break and was going to concentrate on me. Roy has more planned. He has told a number of people that I blame others for my so-called failures and take credit for all of the successes.

Roy, as I pointed out at the dedication of City Hall, this community has achieved much. Too many good people to be named have helped make it happen. My only goal is to find those people, encourage those people, help those people and join with those people to keep the good things happening.

As hard as it is, I truly feel sorry for you and hope that you some day can see lasting good in someone other than Roy Meachum. It must be lonely up there by yourself.

I now sit back as far as Roy is concerned and let him do what he must. I cannot write as well or as often as he, nor do I have the desire to do so. Many people have asked me what is going on with Roy and me that he is writing as he is. I thought I should answer that for people, and particularly because of the friends that he is attacking because of anger toward me.

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Mayor
City of Frederick